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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CCA DAVID MCFARLAND, AND EUR/CE JAMIE  
LAMORE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/08/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [HU](#)  
SUBJECT: HUNGARY: COUNTRY REVIEW ON RELATIONS WITH CUBA

REF: A. SECSTATE 126578  
[B](#). BUDAPEST 194  
[C](#). BUDAPEST 723

Classified By: DCM Jeffrey Levine, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) The DCM met with MFA's America's Department Director Szilveszter Bus on December 9 to discuss ref A. Post views Hungary as a strong supporter of democracy development in Cuba. Although the GoH has joined the EU consensus on lifting the embargo, they view the U.S. approach as appropriate and consistent with their "moral responsibility" to offer their expertise and experience to nations seeking to make the transition to a democratic government (refs B and C). Hungary's diplomatic mission in Havana has been extremely active in reaching out to Cuban dissidents, and Hungarian officials from all Parliamentary parties have made public statements of support for a democratic transition on the island. At the USG's request, the GoH also accepted a record number of protected migrants from Cuba for resettlement in Hungary.

[1](#)2. (C) Bus provided the following information in response to ref A questions:

High-level Visits: None. The highest-level Cuban visitor to Hungary in recent memory was a Deputy Office Director who stopped in Budapest unofficially. Indeed, Cuba withdrew its Ambassador from Hungary last year in order to make clear its displeasure with the GoH's democratization efforts on the island. The only senior Hungarian official to visit Cuba this year was Matyas Eorsi, Chairman of the Parliament's European Affairs Committee, who traveled to Cuba in a private capacity at the invitation of Freedom House in order to meet with a number of Cuban dissidents.

Hurricane Assistance: Hungary neither offered nor delivered assistance to Cuba in the aftermath of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

Economic activity: Minimal, with Hungarian exports equaling USD 1.7 million and Cuban imports totaling USD 157,000. There is a joint economic committee but it has not met in recent memory. Hungary's International Trade Development Agency did attend the recent Havana Trade Fair but no Hungarian companies did.

Exchange Programs: There is a long-standing proposal to use Hungary's International Center for Democratic Transition to give "democratization training" to mid-level Cuban officials but it has seemingly gained no traction on either end. Hungary does not engage in the medical exchanges detailed in reftel.  
Foley